776 spirits (abasimu) (No. 44, p. 286). In Ruanda the religious society Kubandwa is dedicated to him (see p. 124), and after death he is the judge of the just and the unjust. For this reason he plays a more important role than any other god in the ethical and emotional life of the Barundi, and the same is true in Ruanda. This is also demonstrated by the fact that Riangombe (or Imana) is the protector of what to the Murundi and the Munjaruanda are their most treasured possessions: their cattle (see p. 46).

776 According to Ruanda tradition, Riangombe during his human existence was a Muhima of the privileged kin group, the 773 Bega, the highest nobility next to the royal family of the 772 Banjeginja. His father, Babinga, was the religious head of Ruanda, and Riangombe became his successor as the chief of the ababandwa, the religious fraternity. At the same time the political king of Ruanda was Lugansu who at first made war on him but then recognized and honored him (No. 44, p. 281). Imana was very favorably disposed toward the high priest Riangombe during his lifetime. When the latter died, Imana led him to the high volcano Muhawura where Riangombe now grazed his herd and planted his tobacco (the large-leafed Senecio). The plantations, however, were destroyed by the evil spirit Niragongo who resides on the mountain of the same name [Nyiragonga]. Then Riangombe, backed by Imana, sallied out against Niragongo, destroyed his dwelling, and set fire to the mountain (the volcano Nyiragongo). Now Riangombe alternately lives undisturbed on Muhawura and Karisimbi [Mountain] where he grazes his large, sacred, milch cattle herds and where he is served by the imandwa, the spirits of the deceased members of the religious society of the ababandwa. These alone enter his "Paradise," while the souls of unblessed, profane persons (abansigo) are relegated as demons (abasimu) to Namlagira and Nyiragongo where in the "Hell" of the volcanos they lead a shadowy existence as slaves. This is the Ruanda tradition as reported by Father Arnoux (No. 44). The essential elements of this tradition have also been preserved among the Barundi. Indeed, one still finds here even the account that after his death Riangombe was buried on the

776 mountain "Vurunga wa niangombe" in Ruanda (No. 19, p. 216),
773 although the Virunga volcanos of northern Ruanda are completely
772 unknown to the Barundi. The concept of Paradise and Hell (Karisimbe and Nyiragongo) is probably of local origin in Ruanda; in Urundi nothing of this sort is known (van der Burgt, written communication).

776 Both in Urundi and Kisiba, Riangombe is mainly regarded as the protector of cattle. In Kisiba he is only worshipped by the Bahima, and his priest is always a Muhima. However, he does not enjoy special status in Ankole (No. 34, p. 520). Further, since in Ruanda and Urundi he (next to Kiranga) is the focus of worship for the religious fraternities (ababandwa) and since in Urundi he is even revered by the Batwa as their chief deity (No. 19, p. 216), one may conclude that this herdsman's god, who evidently came into the country with the Bahima, has gradually been adopted by the Negroes and has become established in the old Negro mythology of the Bahutu and Batwa.

[123] Father Loupias, however, is of a different opinion. He assumes that Riangombe was originally a deity of the Bahutu or perhaps of the Batwa, and he states that in Ruanda neither the king nor the "great" Batussi are members of the order of the imandwa which is dedicated to Riangombe (No. 28, p. 6). The latter statement, however, is true also for Urundi, but it might be interpreted as aristocratic reserve on the part of the Batussi nobles against close contact with the Bahutu or with the Batwa.

Among the other Barundi deities which have not been mentioned above, the following are most probably the old indigenous gods of the agricultural Bahutu and the Batwa: Indagarra is the god of procreative power, a "Priapus," who is worshipped especially by the Batwa; Njamurimi is regarded as the protector of the fields; Njankuru is the national god of the Basige in northwest Urundi; Ingansje appears to be a god of time, "Chronos"; Wandamutoni is the wife of Imana; Ikisjego is the son of Imana; Tusara is the god of the spirits of domestic service, "kobold"; Kwiguka is the god of lewdness; and there are many others (No. 19, pp. 216-220).

4: Maquet E-5 (1950-1951) 1954 FO42 Rundi PFO42

564 Three socio-'racial' castes are to be
563 distinguished among its peoples: pastoralist Batutsi[1] (about 10 per cent. of
162 the population), agriculturalist Bahutu (about 85 per cent.), and Batwa, hunters and potters (about 5 per cent.).

Man and the Material World

773 The world in which men are placed and which they know through their senses was created *ex nihilo* by *Imana*. The Ruanda word *kurema* means to
776 produce, to make. It is here rendered 'to create' because our informants say that there was nothing before *Imana* made the world. This belief concerning the origin of the material world is universal and clear. To any question on this point, the answer is ready.

772 The Banyarwanda assert that we do not see the whole of the material
[B23] world which was created at that time. The world of our experience is flat; its limits are far away and made of fences like the ones we see around kraals. On these fences there is a big rock which is the sky we see. Beyond the rock there is another world (*ijuru*) similar to our own, with hills, trees, and rivers. This world may be said to be heavenly only in the sense that it is above the sky: it is not a paradise but rather a richer duplicate of our world. Under the soil on which we tread there is yet another world (*ikuzimu*) also conceived as similar to our own. There is nothing infernal about it. The material universe is thus a kind of three-storied construction. It is not impossible to go from one floor to another: some people and animals came from the world above to the intermediate world and, according to some legends, one man at least went to the lower world.

821 In our world the moon and the stars (which are kinds of glow-worms) stay high up in the sky. The sun rises in the morning and in the evening reaches the end of the world where a powerful man kills it and cuts it into pieces. Then he throws the main bone across the vault of heaven to the East where it grows up and the following morning the same process begins again.

773 In essentials our world was created as we see it now, but there have been
[B23] some changes in the course of its history. Some hills were raised up by the kings of Ruanda; the formation of Kivu Lake is accounted for in different folk-tales. Cattle, which rank so high in the Ruanda scale of values, also made a special appearance on the intermediate world. The stories give more than one version of their origin but they agree on their arrival in a world already constituted and inhabited by men. According to some tales, creatures did not originally have the same bodily form as they have now. It is
[B25] said, for instance, that horns were given to animals after they had been created.

772 This, and a belief that the world is now slowly degenerating, getting old (people's stature is decreasing, cows give less milk), suggest that the Ruanda conception of the universe is not a wholly static one. The world does not remain the same, it is in process of evolution. However, when direct

[1] In this paper, following the common use, we have kept the prefixes of the Ruanda words, such as *mu* for the singular and *ba* for the plural.

4: Maquet E-5 (1950-1951) 1954 FO42 Rundi FO42

questions are asked, it appears that this conception of the life of the universe has not been the subject of speculation and is not of great importance to the Banyarwanda.

Without *Imana* the world would not continue to exist and his action is necessary to maintain life. *Imana's* action, however, is not manifested in particular interventions; it is conceived rather as an underlying force which sustains the whole universe but does not interfere in the development of the life of nature. Seeds are put into the ground and after some time plants come up, the banana-trees produce their yields, the cows breed. All this is the normal course of things and we may expect the recurrence of these events at the proper times. This universal order, indeed, is not independent of *Imana*. He made plants grow and animals multiply, but he does not have to act to give fertility in each case. The scholastic distinction between prime cause and secondary causes can very well be applied to Ruanda conceptions. *Imana* acts as the prime cause of the universe and therefore any event may be imputed to him. On the other hand, nature itself includes the secondary causes which account for the regular unfolding of its course.

But this natural order is not unalterable. *Imana* remains master of the rules he has established. There are numerous stories of miracles worked by *Imana* (a stick becomes a cow, teeth are granted to a girl who had none, &c.). Other beings besides *Imana* may act on nature: the spirits of the dead and even some men, the sorcerers. They may prevent somebody's beans from growing, they may have a man or a cow struck down by lightning. In particular, rain, so important in this country where rainfall is very irregular, has been regarded as under man's control. There were rain-makers (*bavubyi*) who had the dangerous responsibility of regulating rainfall.

Natural forces—rain, wind, hail, storms—are not considered as persons having desires and intentions that could be influenced by prayers or offerings. It seems that only thunder is personalized, and is regarded as a king (*mwami*). When a person has been struck by lightning, it is said that the Thunder-King has honoured his subjects with a visit and has taken one of them with him. Lightning receives the same salute as the king of Ruanda.

Banyarwanda implicitly distinguish between the regular course of nature and more or less unexpected events. Towards the former they assume a rational attitude. They do not look to the invisible world to account for the alternation of the phases of the moon, the growth of plants, the breeding of cattle. These phenomena are explicable on the level of secondary causes. Neither *Imana* nor the occult powers interfere in the normal course of material nature. It would be misleading to conceive of the Ruanda people as 'primitives' living in an irrational world where every phenomenon is an enchantment demanding explanation in terms of an intervention of the invisible world. They look at the world in its regular course in the same way as does a product of Western culture.

Of course, a Munyarwanda could not explain the interplay and the exact action of secondary causes as a Western scientist would do. But neither

4: Maquet E-5 (1950-1951) 1954 FO42 Rundi FO42

could the great majority of people in our culture. They believe that some specialists know exactly how natural phenomena work, and they have an idea of the type of explanation the specialists use. Banyarwanda have fundamentally the same attitude.

In relation to natural phenomena which do not appear with such regularity that they may be expected at about this or that time, the ideas of the Banyarwanda are quite different. Because of their unexpectedness, these events resemble the consequences of human intention. As a man suddenly becomes angry and hits somebody, so thunder strikes. If an occurrence is clearly an exception to natural laws, as Banyarwanda know them, they are confused. If I have taken ordinary care of my banana-grove and it does not produce so many or such good fruits as the trees of my neighbours on the same hill, there must be some reason to be sought outside the normal order of the world. Moreover, these unexpected events may often be dangerous and detrimental. Since any Munyarwanda has, as we shall see later, many powerful enemies in the invisible world, he is easily led to suspect them. Consequently, when confronted with happenings in the material world which do not fit into their conception of the normal order of things, the Banyarwanda explain these events as due to a special intervention of supernatural forces. *Imana* himself may be responsible, but when the event is regarded as harmful, ghosts or sorcerers bear the blame.

In this interpretation of unusual events, the Banyarwanda differ significantly from the people of the West. First, it should be emphasized that for us, events which seem to be exceptions to the laws of nature are much rarer. Those who scientifically know a certain field of spatio-temporal reality can show that events unforeseen by laymen, such as a storm, are in fact completely in accordance with the order of nature. When the event seems inexplicable to the specialist, the uninitiated person is generally unaware of the fact and indeed often displays a greater belief in physical science than do scientists themselves. A basic assumption of our culture is that science (of the physico-chemical type) can explain any material phenomenon. Thus any event in that sphere of reality will be interpreted in accordance with that belief. The event may, however, be of such a type that a 'scientific' explanation does not seem possible. For instance, the unpredictable event (a storm, a famine) may happen several times in the same place and no reason can be found for that repetition. The Western mind will then usually have recourse to the concept of chance, by which is meant, that the numerous conditions which must be realized in order to produce the event may happen accidentally to coincide more than once. There is no inevitability in the repetition of that constellation of conditions, it may just happen. The concept of chance, by which we avoid recourse to the supernatural in such cases, is not used by Banyarwanda. For them a phenomenon of the material world is either a part of the normal course of nature and is explicable in itself, or it is extraordinary and must be understood as a supernatural interference.

4: Maquet E-5 (1950-1951) 1954 FO42 Rundi FO42

In order not to irritate the dead various observances and interdicts must be complied with. The 'cult' of the *bazimu* is accordingly aimed at appeasing them. They are frequently offered a few drops of milk or hydromel. Sometimes they require the immolation of a goat or even a bull. A girl spends some time in the small hut dedicated to a *muzimu* in order that he may enjoy having a woman. Other practices are, however, more difficult to interpret. Water may be given to the *muzumu* while at the same time he is told very loudly that it is milk. The explanation given by most informants is that *bazimu* are rather stupid and that these mock offerings are not given to the direct ancestors, who are respected, but only to collaterals who, as *bazimu*, are hated. However, it is not very clear how one can at the same time fear the powerful *bazimu* and deceive them so grossly.

Among the *bazimu*, a small group, *Ryangombe* and his *imandwa*, is particularly powerful and important. *Ryangombe* is said to have been the chief of a small band of friends and clients. He was accidentally killed by a buffalo during a hunting party. In order not to leave *Ryangombe*, his friends threw themselves on the bull's horns. *Imana* gave them a special place, the Karisimbi, a former volcano, where they have a notably more agreeable life than the other *bazimu*. To have the privilege of joining them there, Banyarwanda have to be initiated into the sect (*kwendwa*). The members of the sect believe that non-initiates go after death into an active volcano, the Nyiragongo, where they suffer torments of fire. We have here an interesting instance of conflicting ideologies in a non-literate society: the common belief that all *bazimu* reside in the underworld and the belief of initiates, who are extremely numerous, in a mildly paradisal life for themselves and a hell for other people. During their earthly sojourn the initiates have other advantages, for the powerful *imandwa* do not harm them and indeed protect them from the injurious activities of other spirits.

The relations between *Ryangombe* and *Imana* seem to be conceived as those between a client (*mugaragu*) and his patron (*shebuja*), persons who are linked by that typical Ruanda institution called *buhake*, in which a man in an inferior situation in the scale of wealth and social power asks another to grant him his protection and the possession of some cows; in return the client becomes his patron's man and owes him various services. *Ryangombe* is believed to be protected by *Imana* and to act more or less as his intermediary with regard to the initiates. But *Imana* is not present in *Ryangombe's* paradise. The cult of *Ryangombe* has importance as a force of social cohesion. Batutsi, Bahutu, and Batwa may all be initiated. This function is quite overtly stressed: *Ryangombe* has said himself that he should be called upon by everybody.

Diviners and Sorcerers

Two categories of men have special relations with the invisible world: diviners (*bapfumu*) and sorcerers (*barozi*). The former are interpreters of *Imana's* will, which they can discern in the figures made by knuckle-bones,

4: Maquet E-5 (1950-1951) 1954 FO42 Rundi FO42

in the viscera of chickens, rams, and bulls, or even by intuition without the aid of any instrument. Some of them use a medium, usually female, possessed by *Biheko* (one of the *imandwa*) or are possessed themselves. Thanks to them it is possible to oppose a certain defence against the *bazimu*. They can identify the spirit who causes illness or sterility or is killing the cattle; they can tell what will appease him. Batutsi and Bahutu practise as *bapfumu*. It was formerly a very respectable calling; the techniques and methods of interpretation are often transmitted from father to son. Sorcerers (*barozi*), on the contrary, are criminals obliged to conceal their activities. If found they could be immediately killed. Some of them are believed to use poisons; for instance, a powder made from the lungs of a person who has died from tuberculosis is mixed in food. Others act by magical means: sending a *muzimu* to strangle somebody, acting through lightning or an animal, using spells. Besides a certain training in the formulae, they have to acquire a magical force handed on by another sorcerer.

Such, very sketchily drawn, is the non-material world of Banyarwanda. This world is dominated by *Imana*, essentially powerful and good. The century-old problem of evil in the world, particularly acute when there is a belief in the existence of a being who is omnipotent and infinitely good, has been solved by putting the responsibility for all evil and all suffering on agents other than *Imana*. These agents are mostly human, for *bazimu* are indeed human personalities and sorcerers are men. *Imana* himself does not cause any evil but he allows the causes of evil to act. As God's beneficent action is remote, we may say that the invisible world is on the whole malevolent. Under the serene reign of the prime cause, ill-willed secondary causes have a large freedom of action which they use to torture men. Compared with the earthly world, the invisible one is rather disquieting, our informants told us. When daily life is painful, when personal security is threatened by external dangers, the thought of the invisible world present in this one has not the psychological function of relieving anxieties.

But to what extent is the invisible world a permanent presence in the lives of Ruanda people? Not to a very great extent, it seems. Their existence is not permanently dominated by the fear of *bazimu* and sorcerers. As in the material world and its regular changes, Banyarwanda consider that there are 'natural' events in the human sphere, i.e. in the domain of human existence and the part of the world that man changes by his action (agriculture, cattle-rearing, hut-building, &c.). By 'natural' we mean that these events are understood without reference to the action of the supernatural world. Some antecedent events or acts are regarded as natural causes of others. To get a cold at the beginning of the dry or the rainy season is considered to be due to the change of weather. It is known that yaws can be got by contagion. Even death is very often accepted without seeking any magical explanation. It is expected, for instance, that people will die because of old age. If beans had been planted on poor soil, a bad crop would not mean that the field had been bewitched. Thus when recurrences have